

THE CYNICK.

BY GROWLER GRUFF, ESQUIRE,

*AIDED BY A CONFEDERACY OF
LETTERED DOGS.*

"We'll snarl, and bite, and play the dog,"
"For dogs are honest."

Vol. I.

Saturday, October 5, 1811.

No. III.

FROM THE MANAGER'S DOG.

MR. GRUFF,

When I took upon me to open your confederacy, the budget, of what among us is denominated managerial matters, I confided in your secrecy, and never fancied that what was emitted from your publishers counter, to the publick ear, would ever have been heard of by the manager. I did not suspect it, because I said that he never read the publications of the day. He professes at least to hold them in too utter a contempt, to absorb the attention of the judge of dramatick literature. The director of an establishment, where the efforts of genius are to be exhibited, and the exertion of the Dramatist, should be properly encouraged; who despises the offspring of

his countrymen, and regales himself, after the prolixity of his box-lobby harangues, with the spicy syllabub of an European production; should naturally enough, turn away the offerings of an American muse, without even glancing over the title, or the *Dramatis persone*. He should, certainly be privileged to throw upon the shelf, every dramatick composition, which by the necessity of the circumstance, the unfortunate authour is compelled to entrust in his hands. Regard to the approbation of the town, is too humiliating by him to be cherished, and the certainty of a deposit in the vault of oblivion too easily, by the work, to be obtained. Fortunately for the publick, his *favourite* friends and supporters, have never been convicted of dramatising. Though some among them are sufficiently eager, to be considered as the authours of every anonymous production, and actually, intimate, 'by ambiguous givings out,' that they are the gentlemen, who garnish the head of a prospectus, with names which they secretly contrive for themselves. Had they the inclination, to set out any peculiar display of theatrical imagination, you would perhaps find incident allotted for a tragedy, ingeniously wrought up into a risible melodrame; whimsical stratagem, and delicate artifice, in some ages, the characteristicks of comedy, you might discover, in the labyrinth of humour, mingled with incitements to fun, and intended to be understood, as a serious, and heart-rending play. Heroes might be bellowing, about blood and murder, in their *comick* essays; and an attempt at jollity and good humour, be visible in their more *tragical* designs. The conclusion of a comedy, might be made with a sorrowful marriage; and the finale

of a Tragedy, with a laughing murder; and what could be better suited to the taste, or more profusely obtain the admiration of *these* gentry, than to behold a bridegroom on the summit of happiness, falling into despair, or a disappointed and ferocious hero, dying in a devotion to Momus.

But I did not intend this digression. I shall say no more upon the subject now. I shall devote to it a leisure hour at a future time. The object of my present communication is to relate to you, the astonishment I felt upon hearing that I was discovered—that the manager had actually perused your little book in private—that he had resolved upon discharging the confederate of Gruff, who was so immediate to his own person;—and to caution you, as to any confessions, relative to my connexion. Alarming were my apprehensions when I approached him. They became dreadful when I was scouted, like other dogs of the house, from the presence of “lean Cassius.” The Falstaff figured gentlemen, who is his coadjutor in proprietaryship, and whose regularity and justness of administration, when he reigned alone, was calculated to obtain the acquiescence of his subjects, and to excite the admiration of his visitors, has disclaimed any connexion with the late arbitrary rules, or the council who enacted them. But fancy, Mr. Gruff, the agitation I experienced, when the council were instantly assembled; the friends of lean Cassius, or lean Lignum, of whom it is composed. Every possible, legal and illegal, proper and improper, and, as has since turned out, *impossible* means were exerted to discover which of the managers dogs, had confederated with the lettered part

of his species. Every member, who was master of a canine animal, agreed that his was either a dancing, a barking, a howling, or an idle dog; but none of them, no, not one sir, had sufficient ingenuity to possess a *lettered* dog; except the lean and learned Lignum, and his corpulent colleague. Yet as these were *two*, the difficulty still existed, until a waggish member of their board discovered that *Lignum's* dogs were *lettered* on the collars. A smile of exultation played upon the countenance of the wag, and indignation and fury filled the mind of the manager. The unfortunate circumstance of his owning a brace of us, again prevented my detection, and giving up the design of a certain discovery, they commenced their official business, and entered into the consideration of the effect of their arbitrary law. Happily for me, that I was coupled with a brother, or I should not have been permitted to remain in their chamber. Had they been successful in their inquiries, I could no longer have communicated the result of their deliberations; nor have given you any account of the resolves, at that assemblage enacted. How, they then endeavoured to palliate the oppressive measure of which the theatrical community have complained. How they, in their good humours determined, that although the number of musicians, would be lessened, to accommodate themselves, yet they in future, should not be suffered, to twang their fiddle strings, to strike their harpsichords, or to remove their stools and benches, whilst an actor is delivering his soliloquy; or to bustle through the orchestre, occasionally throwing down their instruments, with violence, and continually popping up their heads, before the specta-

tor, whilst an interesting scene attracts his attention.—How in their splenetick moments, they again reverted to their canine assailants, and adopted the suggestions of the infuriated Lignum, remarkable for his diction, who to exhibit himself in the shape of their superiour, and which in truth he is, harangues them in a superficial style, and at once confounding them by the unintelligibility of his address, carries his point that you, and all the plebeian herd you represent, are of a proletarian race; that the prolegomena of the CYNICK contains not force enough for a prognostick; and, that the pouch-mouthed populosity of this metropolis, will never be brought, to utter an unanimous declaration against the present invasion of their rights. How this unutterable display of literary intellect, brought them to a determination, that the late ordinance of the corporation, against the free and unlimited roving of our brethren, now neglected by the mayor and officers, should be properly executed, and that they themselves would see it done.—How they declared that the hydrophobia, (the sovereign remedy of which is *choler*) had found its way into the book-shop of your publishers; and how, in consequence, they immediately issued an advertisement, now to be found in the Gazettes, to receive proposals, at the back door of the theatre, from twenty supernumeraries, for the immediate operation of this express intent.

My situation, in the cage remains unmolested and I shall occasionally communicate to you, sir, the occurrences among a certain description of the audience as well as, the future transaction of the managers gentlemen. Having escaped a discovery as I related, I have

nothing further to fear, as long, as I can repose upon your secrecy. Your publishers, perhaps, may not be so close mouthed as yourself, and from them I desire to be withheld. Threats of a violent, and somewhat imperious nature, have been uttered and unless they are determined to oppose a steady resolution, to the menaces, which may be offered, my detection, as well as your exposure will be the natural consequence.

THE GROANS OF THE TOWN.

[No. III.]

Eventful time, through every varying age,
Crowds with strange facts, the world's portentous stage;
Change follows change, through natures endless round;
Destruction still pursues creation's bound,
Nation succeeds to nation, man to man,
And from their ashes bursts the future plan:
But 'midst the tumults of a vicious rage,
When did the book of fate shew such a page
As now; would I, the Roman's pow'r possest,
To search with barbed words, the harden'd breast;
Would that Pope's spirit, could direct my pen
To blast vain folly in her teeming den;
To deal compunction o'er the iron heart,
And make the villain at his image start;
Then for the common weal these powers I'd use,
And drag the shameless from the festering stews;

Destroy the shames that blur our honour's face,
And hold the wretch to merited disgrace ;
Drag from the temple the unhallow'd priest,
And tell the miscreant whence his wealth increas'd.
What times are these ? when all promotions vie,
With those, who best can flatter, or can lie ;
When virtuous merit's made a public jest,
And honours circle folly's jingling crest ;
When no one thrives, but panders, bawds and knaves,
And starvling wits, who list as rich men's slaves :
Or frame with slanderous tongue a bawdy tale,
And hold up virtue to a public sale ;
Praise the dull sayings of a wealthy fool,
And swear his nonsense of the Attic school ;
These are the arts alone in practice now ;
And every one who'd thrive, must cringe and bow.
See learning weep o'er O*****'s mouldering shrine,
While fools and knaves by his permission shine ;
He who once scourg'd the follies of the age,
Now forc'd to eulogize the vacant page ;
To dress the bastards of a crazy brain,
And worship folly for the sake of gain ;
Lo ! he who trod the highway path to fame,
Now for a pittance shields a fool from shame :
At such a sight sure every heart must weep,
Who holds not honour, merit, learning, cheap.
In these dire times, when bankrupts crowd each street,
And plots o'ershadow every face we meet ;
Deficit bankers, mercenary knaves,
Lotteries, brokers and official slaves,

Haunt every path, by daring footstep trod,
They stain their honour, and pollute their God.
And bold in infamy, declaim afar,
'Gainst morals, virtue, sense, continued war,
Blast every theme to patriot bosoms dear,
And cheat their country, to give private cheer :
Live out a damned life in shameless ease,
Then sink a prey to conscience and disease ;
To some less shameless wretch, their wealth dispense
To purchase character, at truth's expense,
To load a marble with unmeaning phrase,
And crowd for weeks a paper with his praise,
Who, when alive, was stain'd with every crime,
The clotted sins that load the wings of time.
But these beyond the poet's power fly,
They know no shame nor fear—save but to die ;
These we consign to fate's unerring laws,
To paint their characters—decide their cause ;
What tho' to curb the power of vicious men,
Escape the bounds, prescrib'd my daring pen ;
Yet to the public eye, we'll hold their tools,
And scourge, unceasingly, officious fools :
Folly, like fire, spreads its influence wide,
And one huge fool becomes a millions guide ;
Barlow's dull epick, prais'd by all the age,
Tho' scarce one plauder ever read one page ;
Happy sage Barlow, to be prais'd unread,
Or soon the wreath must wither on thy head ;
Yet though some fain declare thy work unwise,
Still some more dull than you, the work will criticise ;

Among the 'xtent of thy admiring group,
See Doctor Celsus, leader of the troop ;
A man now stands before the publick eye,
Whose soaring fame is six feet one inch high,
And by his own example fain would prove,
Monboddo's theory a sorry move,
For he so vast, erect, maintains his station,
He gives the lie to all the monkey nation ;
Now, while the learned mania, round him flew,
Commences lecturer and critick too ;
First he brings forth his dull and sleepy notes,
And Barlow spreads the pillow of his thoughts,
For in Fame's temple rightly he conceived,
He never as himself could be received,
And thought that gewgaws plac'd in such a soil,
Might richly pay him for his wasted oil.
Full oft he's been the gorgon of a tribe,
And forg'd a windy speech without a bribe,
Save that which fame would whisper every where,
'Tis true some laugh'd when he was in the chair ;
Speeches, physicks, criticisms, plays,
Wasted his nights, and occupied his days ;
To raise his practice he has often tried,
To write their lives, who by his physick died ;
Whether by books or drugs the fate's the same,
One kills the patient, the other damns his fame ;
At puffs, squibs, eulogy, he tries his pen,
Sometimes lectures children, sometimes men ;
An equal greatness he preserves in all,
And all acknowledge that the man is tall ;

And sure 'tis like that Celsus' growing fame,
Will yield to none but Serson's lasting name :
Then spur on Doctor thro' this busy life,
See Cooper drive a chariot or a wife ;
Dash—now should be the watchword and reply,
Be bold, and resolute, and all defy ;
Some affectation too may profit well,
To bind th' admiring crowd in magic spell ;
For whether as doctor, parson, play'r you stand,
All ladies judge men's merit by the hand ;
If white and pretty, he's a charming man,
If the reverse, don't like him—pray who can ?
How arts improve in our enlightened days,
Lo the fair palmist character displays ;
Can tell if learn'd, or weak, or deep in love,
Or if a good or evil husband prove.
Therefore, good Doctor, range cosmetic arts,
If you'd be known a man of goodly parts.

THE IRON AGE.

*Omne nefas : fugere pudor, verumque fidesque
In quorum subiere locum fraudesque dolique
Insidiaeque et vis et amor sceleratus habendi.* OVID.

POETS have sung, and poets sing with truth,
Once nature flourish'd in the charms of youth ;
And infant mankind sleeping in her arms,
Imbib'd her virtues and partook her charms.

Then did the earth a common harvest yield
And nations reap'd in peace the yellow field ;
All then were brothers, man to man was friend,
And justice rul'd the world from end to end,
Great nature smil'd, exerted ev'ry power
And bless'd her children in their happiest hour.
Their happiest hour ! too soon alas ! it fled,
And sorrowing nature hung her pensive head ;
For came the fiend, the accursed spoiler came
To blast her sons with guilt's devouring flame ;
With foul desires, with hearts that aim'd at wrongs,
With hands for fraud and bold blasphemous tongues.
The virgin mother wept, but wept in vain,
The spoiler triumph'd and assur'd his reign ;
Drove her from man, whose manners she inclin'd,
And damn'd to hellish deeds the human mind.
To silent caves she fled, and sacred shades,
To holy groves and solitary glades ;
Where from the low and vulgar great retir'd,
Illustrious votaries, she has always fir'd ;
And still she smiles on those who offer there
The virtuous vow, the pure but silent pray'r.
Meanwhile angelick Justice spread for flight
Her seraph wings that blaz'd in flakes of light,
And flew to heaven ; reposing there to wait
The final day—the day of final fate.
Dark was the night, when wretched man o'erpow'rd
Sunk before vice—and black misfortune lower'd.
So low indeed were they that ev'ry beast
Might spurn them justly—and the very least,

The lowest reptile might sincerely pray
That God would never make it vile as they.

Thus stood the earth when heaven's relenting smiles
Beam'd in bright circles round the Ægean isles ;
Cheer'd the brave Grecian struggling with the gloom
And rais'd his genius from the op'ning tomb ;
Gave him fair freedom, freedom gave him art,
And art refin'd his noble lib'ral heart.
Such as has foil'd description, made poetick fire
Cold as Zealandick airs—but made the world admire.

Hence was the Athenian still a publick man——
His glory, to defend the enlighten'd plan ;
His pride, to know the common weal his own ;
His boast, for it, to brave the eastern throne ;
To die a hero, or in letters live
Immortal—as his land alone could give.
For arts were theirs, and virtues, but the age
Was justly glorious for a free born stage ;
Publick as all was, unconfin'd and free,
The scourge of vice, the friend of liberty.
Where nature, worshipp'd, now resum'd her reign,
And all the virtues follow'd in her train,
And justice look'd from heav'n in mercy bright
And taught Athenian hearts to applaud the right.
But soon the view was chang'd, their glory low—
Barbarian tyrants struck the fatal blow ;
While their few friends in oligarchick pride
Scowl'd o'er the stage, and publick pleasure died.
An iron age return'd again on men ;
Freedom and nature sought the shades again.

In Rome awhile, great Roscius trod the stage,
And shew'd Thalia's laugh and proud Melpomene's
rage;

But conquering Rome essay'd in vain to reach,
That force in arts, triumphant Greece can teach.

Now o'er the world, the general gloom was spread,
And sacred science sunk among the dead.
While, like a meteor glaring through the storm,
Monastick folly rear'd his reverend form,
Darted his Lateran lightnings round the world
And from the mind of man his impious reason hurl'd.
While regal puppets, or while regal knaves,
Kneel'd to the chief, his very humble slaves;
Or aided priests to deal their deadly blows
At sense and spirit, superstition's foes.
The blows were struck—when lo! the expiring groan
Rous'd up the bold reformers—they alone
Recall'd to life the sinking hopes of men;
And sense and reason flourish'd once again.
But nature kept aloof—and would not join,
The motley gang which modern times combine;
The catholick crew of monks and nuns and priests,
The solemn Greek, the vile Mohammedan beasts,
The saintly puritans, and the powder'd shapes,
Of cavaliers—all vicious, grinning apes.
She shunn'd them, and she never will be seen
While times and manners keep their modern mein.
She hates dissimulation and will be
With truth and pleasure, sense and liberty,

In groves she still resides and reigns supreme,
Queen of the mead, the forest, and the stream.

Yet among men, great nature scorns controul
And stamps her worship on the human soul.
Tho' avarice ruled the world with sov'reign sway,
And taste and pleasure felt their sad decay;
Tho' now no relick of the golden time
Remain'd to compensate for vice and crime;
Yet—yet the charms of natural life prevail'd,
To inspire the breast when power and pride assail'd.
For when fair freedom rous'd with generous shame
And fired her British lamp with Grecian flame,
She in extatick trance, their arts ador'd,
And own'd great nature still the sov'reign lord.

Thus then the theatre rose to nature's queen,
And boughs and branches deck'd the sylvan scene;
And ev'ry chaste resemblance brought to view,
The former joys of golden times and true.
It spurn'd the chains of power and base restraint
Of kings, or licensors, or scolding saint;
And like the emerald of the silver sea,
Victorious smil'd, and bade her friends be free.
Here nature's shrine was fix'd, the temple rose
On general sanction—clear to friends or foes;
And common, like primæval ages here,
Kings, nobles, yeomen, breath'd an equal prayer,
She, through the wilds, with Shakspeare lov'd to
 roam,
Till the bard woo'd her to his scenick home.

She came when courted and presided long
O'er tragick measures and o'er comick song.
Garrick her fav'rite she inspir'd to show
The magick spring of mirth, the sacred source of
 woe.

And Siddons, Kemble, Cooke protect her still,
From each attack of base mechanick skill ;
And while the world, in ruins tempest tost,
Shivers at ev'ry breeze, in gloomy horrors lost.
Within the sacred walls of fancy's bower,
The golden age revives and shines in blissful power.

Thus, where the vital sun of freedom shone
And arts aspir'd, theatrick taste was known ;
For nature still expends with liberal hand
And either blasts or blesses ev'ry land ;
Patriots alone or despots bear the sway,
And men like freemen live, or else like slaves obey.

Our fathers, when they fled from Europe's shore,
Brought all those arts they cherish'd there before :
Among them, buskin'd chiefs prepar'd to wield
The magick wand, and tread the enchanted field.
In little bands they made their first essay,
Where wharves now stand, and commerce fills the way.
On Southwark boards in nobler form they tread,
As the state licens'd, and Old Hallam led ;
Hallam the good, who liv'd to valanc'd age,
And died the father of our infant stage.
Next, as the broad brimm'd rage of bigot hate,
Began at reason's call, to moderate,

The city saw with pleasure and with pride,
Within its bounds the Thespian Muse reside.
For home-bred apes of England or of France,
Blush at her smile, and startle at her glance;
And fashion takes from her its chastest forms;
And native breasts, poetick genius warms.
Then shone our day-star of theatrick fame;
Then Hodgkinson, and many another name,
Remember'd by our fathers, bless'd the land;
Rewarded amply by the publick hand.
For then no cold ingratitude had place,
Nor was a player's glory mean or base.
No mushroom youngster brav'd the publick eye,
His generous patrons nobly to defy,
To scorn the publick feeling, outrage sense,
And, rest secure in insignificance.
Ah! no, for patriot statesmen then adorn'd
The circling seats and mimick sorrows mourn'd.
Then, glorious days! great Washington was seen,
Watching with steady eye the moving scene;
Franklin was there—there Jefferson could meet,
His rival Hamilton with cordial greet:
For noble minds their passions regulate,
And friends in private life, are foes to serve the state.
Such minds as theirs, oppos'd to tyrant power,
Would not permit it in the social hour;
And well a little manager might fear
To plan his schemes while such as they were there.
Nor would they; for their thoughts were always bent
To serve the publick, with the best intent.

Then modest merit found paternal hands
Of kindness ; never churlish stern commands.
Speak to it Wood, and force a tear to say,
If tears can spring, when feeling's far away ;
That once you knew the generous, manly Cain
Ask a retreat from woe, nor ask in vain.
Unhappy Cain ! you left for woman's charms,
Fortune and friends, and shelter'd in her arms ;
Brief was your sorrow, as your love sincere ;
All was forgotten on an early bier.
Now o'er your grave, the thespian muses weep,
And sighs of beauty lull your peaceful sleep.
But o'er the boards, a female form was seen—
Lo Warren walk'd, lo ! virtues fairest queen.
Whether the lovely Belvidera wept,
Or Juliana pert and proudly stept ;
Whether poor Desdemona mourn'd in vain,
Or mild Ophelia rav'd in melting strain ;
Still mem'ry touch'd, to lovely Warren true,
Sweets to the sweet, must mourn a long adieu.

Such were the days Sicilian muses sung,
When Saturn reign'd, and human kind was young.
Alas ! 'tis so no more—Alas ! the stage
Now feels the horrors of an iron age.
An iron age—when wealth alone commands
Obsequious bows and curst rapacious hands ;
When nature is expell'd and managers vend,
Shakspeare and Otway to their richest friend ;
Acknowledge wealth alone can sanction taste,
And count all acting but to it as waste ;

Who spurn the publick pleasure, nor e'en stop,
To turn great nature's temple to a banking shop.
So, to the charms of mild and melting youth
The vows of G***** spoke eternal truth;
His virgin blush'd consenting—marriage ties
Bind them in one, but love forever flies.
Those charms he gain'd, the obliging husband sold,
And sacred feelings barter now for gold.
So the poor youth, the child of summers heat,
Languish'd for bed, for cloathing, and for meat—
When lo! behold! in ripen'd grace was seen
The modest girl of three-score years and ten,
And rich to ecstasy—his rolling eye
Touch'd her soft heart, and drew the infectious sigh.
The priest was call'd; they pass'd a glorious night,
In bundling raptures of supreme delight;
The morning came, the bridegroom understood
Her wealth was merely for her widowhood.
In private life, in pleasure, church and state,
An iron hand conducts the general fate.
See gold the object of the nation's wars,
See gold the object of the virgin's cares,
And avarice, raging in a player's heart,
Makes him expose it to satirick smart.
But folly goes with baseness, hand in hand,
And threatens day by day, our wretched land.